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POEMS.

BY

ROBERT JAMES.

“Amatory poets sing their loves
In liquid lines, mellifluously bland.”

BYRON.

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POEMS.

ODE TO BEAUTY.¹

SWEETEST emotion of the mind,
Hail, Beauty! child of Joy!
Though felt by all, by none defin'd,
Philosopher or boy.

O'er both alike does reason cease to reign,
Who feel th' effect, or would the cause explain.²

Thy influence, diffusive, flings
A mental feeling o'er material things;
Thy pleasure is of both combin'd,
Reflected on the object from the mind.

So when the landscape's varied grace,
With eye intent, we view,
The mind can colour form and space,
With crimson, green, and blue;
So in her solitary bow'r
A fancied fragrance floats around the flow'r.

The works of nature and of art,
 Of thy dominions form a part ;
 And scientific truths severe,
 And abstract reasoning austere ;
 And who so harden'd as deny
 The beauty of morality ?

The veriest wretch that shuns the day,
 Stain'd with a thousand crimes,
 In fancy oft will turn away
 To brighter, happier times ;
 And sternly beautiful appears
 The virtue which his conscience loves and fears.

By natural tendency, the mind
 To all that's beautiful inclin'd,
 Augments each day th' ideal hoard,
 With universal beauty stor'd :
 And when an object real and fair
 Is present to our sight,
 Waking the feelings form'd before
 Of beauty and delight,
 Link'd, by association's chain,
 The mind recalls the complex whole again.

Therefore, when in her fairest dress,
 Beauty combines all loveliness,
 All joys of sound, of touch, of eye,
 Embodying in reality,
 What wonder she should always move,
 And melt, at once, the rudest soul to love ?

LINES TO A COLD BEAUTY.

Farewell, you're unworthy to share
 The pleasures that love can impart ;
 So deceitful and selfish you are,
 So cold and unfeeling your heart.
 Like the palace of ice, where each ray
 Seem'd brighter than crystal or gold,
 Which chill'd, while it shone and look'd gay,
 So you smil'd, and e'en smiling were cold.

All precious you seem'd to the view,
 All worthless and brittle to prove ;
 While each word and each look was untrue,
 And false and unmeaning your love.
 Each glance of your beautiful eyes
 Lit raptures that lur'd to deceive,
 And all your endearments and sighs
 But mock'd, while they made me believe.

To cherish ^{no} ~~us~~ dear recollections,
 To be deaf to fond memory's voice,
 To be callous to finer affections,
 Will never, I hope, be my choice.
 The glove that is proof to the thorn,
 Would crush the soft leaves of the rose—
 The heart by no sorrow that's torn
 No pleasures of tenderness knows.

Farewell !—yet will mem'ry to me
 Oft recal some wild heart-chilling token ;
 I shall sadly, at times, think on thee,
 And the vain hollow words thou hast spoken.

Heartless and selfish, live on,
Unenvied, unpitied, unfriended ;
I had once joy'd to call thee mine own,
But that sweet illusion is ended.

FROM HORACE, LIB. I. CAR. 5.

What perfum'd boy, with rosy wreath,
Now blandishes with thee beneath
 Some pleasant bow'r?
For whom, my Pyrrha, do you dress
Your hair, in winning simpleness?
 How soon the hour
When he shall mourn o'er thy deceit,
And rail at his how alter'd fate;
 And wond'ring prove
The waters rough with black'ning storm,
Who now enjoys thy golden form
 In dreaming love;
Who blindly, fondly, hopes to find
Thee ever constant, ever kind;
Nor fears, nor knows the treach'rous wind—
 Thrice wretched he
Who loves, but knows thee not! For me
The votive tablet will attest
I've offer'd up my dripping vest
 To Neptune, God o' th' sea.³

TO K * * *

Forbear, thou proud and lovely one,
 My passion to disdain,
 And learn of beauty, and of youth,
 No longer to be vain.

Perchance, when some few years are past
 By natural decree,
 Thy lip, that now is curl'd in scorn,
 May sue instead for me.

My mouth, which now thy cheek attracts,
 May with that cheek cohere,
 Absorbing it in one long kiss,
 The longer the more dear.

Then may this erring, throbbing head
 On thy soft bosom rest,
 And thy inexorable heart
 May beat within this breast.

PARODIED
FROM
WORDSWORTH'S LINES
ON ALOYS REDING.⁵

Along Brighthelmstone's western cliff,
A tessell'd pavement treading,
We reach'd a pastry cook's—within
Sits pretty Harriet Reading.

Well judg'd the man who plac'd her there,
To spread his shop's connexion;
And haply with a finer care,
Platonical affection.

The sun regards her o'er the sea
As much as all the men do,
And, sinking, turns his farewell look
On that inviting window.

And oft she tempts the Brighton Beaux
With fruit and ice to linger,
Till all is dim, save her bright eyes—
To touch her tender finger.

ON THE SAME.

Since Harriet's form I first did view,
 And eyes so form'd for slaughter,
 Thin as a wafer soon I grew,
 And weak as soda water.

My Harriet is as custard nice,
 And sweet as wine home made ;
 But her heart is cold as water-ice,
 And cool as lemonade.

Hot is my flame, as new Cayenne,
 And strong as brandy cherry ;
 Lively is she, as au Romain
 Punch, nor a whit less merry.

One day I for some kisses pray'd,
 By this my love to tell ;
 But Harriet, with spirit, said—
 “Those, sir, I do not *sell*.”

Fresh as a peach, her cheeks endang-
 -er all who look upon her ;
 Her neck is white as a blanc mange,
 And she's a *maid of honour*.

IMITATED FROM SHAKSPEARE'S

"BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND."

Ride, ride, thou tranquil moon,
 Thy beauty fades more soon
 Than mental purity ;
 Thy ray is not so bright
 As is religion's light
 Unto a Christian's eye.

Fall, fall, thou glittering snow,
 Thou hast less pure a glow
 Than maiden innocence ;
 Thou'rt not to earth a shield,
 Like that which virtues yield,
 Although thy cloak be dense.

* * *

Spread, spread ye dark'ning shades,
 And o'er the forest glades
 Your horrid length dilate :
 You are not half so black
 As is the baleful pack
 Of envy, pride, and hate.

Rise, rise, thou frowning rock,
 And dare unmov'd the shock
 Of angry wind and flood :
 Thy head is not so high
 As patriot bravery,
 And tyranny withstood. ⁶

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Might I be a nightingale !
 Trilling through my dusky throat ?
 A constant stream of one lov'd note.

When, at the close of sultry day,
 Twilight melts itself away,
 When, in the silent hour of night,
 The moon o'er heaven sheds her light,
 While the conscious planets listen,
 And the night-dew'd flowers glisten,
 And the shadows are the thickest,
 And the grass is growing quickest, ⁸
 And faithful watch the dog is keeping,
 While the weary world is sleeping,
 Then might I be a nightingale !
 Bidding careless sleep farewell
 I would tell a tender tale.

But to the forsaken rose,
 No more my passion I'd disclose,
 To thee alone I would complain,
 To thee I'd sing of love * *
 Veil'd within a neighbouring tree,
 I would pour my melody,
 Trilling through my dusky throat
 A constant stream of one lov'd note.

TO MARY.

Ah why, a needless pain to prove,
 Dar'd I about thy form to move?
 For who could see, and could not love
My Mary?

Those eyes, illum'd with native truth;
 That sweet, goodhumour'd, smiling mouth,
 All "redolent of joy and youth,"
My Mary,

Bespoke thee, sure as face can paint,
 Gay, amiable, intelligent,
 Without hypocrisy or cant,
My Mary.

Methought that had I gold, instead
 Of nothing save my heart and head,
 I might, with hope, my passion plead,
My Mary.

Methought what joy to deck thy hair,
 With jewels, from Golchonda rare,
 Thyself with gifts from gay Cashmere,
My Mary.

Methought, what pride and what delight,
 Mid London's royal scenes at night,
 Wert thou most fair, and rich, and bright,
My Mary.

I would not, if I could, I swear,
 Accept a sacrifice so dear,
 Without ten thousand pounds a-year,
My Mary.

Yet do I fear an inward strife,
 When you become another's wife,
 My life, my love, my love, my life,
My Mary.

Forgive, great God, if I repine,
 And wish my part had other been,
 In this preparatory scene,

* * *

If I am form'd all joys of sense
 To taste with pleasure too intense,
 Forgive my nature the offence,

* * *

And thou forgive this hurried strain,
 From one who'd die to save thee pain,
 From one thou ne'er wilt see again,
My Mary.

And if our Maker shall approve
 That we shall meet in realms above,
 Where all is happiness and love,
My Mary,

Then mid your fashionable crew,
 Don't cut a youth who loves so true;
 O hate not him who dotes on you,
My Mary.

FROM THE PROMETHEUS VINCTUS,

Line 906. ED. SCHOL.

O he was wise, most wise indeed,
 Who held, and first maintain'd the creed,
 That he alone is well allied
 Who of his own rank takes a bride;
 Forbidding one of low estate
 Desire to wed the rich or great.

* * *

What, though his organs and his mind
 Are tun'd the finest of their kind,
 Still must the wretch, unknown to fame,
 Marry a homely country dame;
 And dirty Cupid's darts to slaughter
 Some purse-proud upstart's vulgar daughter.

EPIGRAMS,
 FROM THE GREEK.

I.

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.⁹

Too soon, grim Monarch; with unholy hand,
 You snatch'd this infant to your dreary land;
 Like some fair rose-bud, pluck'd from mortal sight,
 Ere all its beauties open into light.

Cease, wretched parents ! cease your wailings wild,
 Nor mourn for ever your departed child !
 Her youthful graces, and her form so fair,
 Deserv'd a dwelling in the realms of air.
 As Hylas once—believe the soothing lay—
 The Nymphs—not Death—have borne your child away.

II.

APOLLON: II. 118. ¹⁰

You are sleeping, my friend, while the bowl is e'en calling ;
 Wake up, and indulge in no burdensome care :
 No heel-taps, but drink, till in danger of falling,
 Its tottering burden your knee scarce can bear.
 Come, awake Diodorus—the time will be long
 In the realms where no liquor our clay ever wets ;
 Lose no moments, but let our potations be strong—
 Only look at our bald philosophical pates.

III.

TO VENUS.

For thee, the Ocean's guardian, I prepare
 These cakes and gifts of consecrated prayer ;
 To-morrow o'er the broad Ionian sea
 I speed to th' bosom of my Eidothea ;
 Venus, shine kindly on my love and sails,
 Mistress alike of marriages and gales.

VERSICLES TO DORA.

When I go to bed and snore-a
 In my sleep I dream of Dora.
 With the beams of bright Aurora,
 When I wake I think of Dora.
 When on land and when on shore-a
 To my mind I picture Dora.
 Behind so pretty, and before-a
 Is the figure of my Dora.
 Will you my lost heart restore-a
 Or give yours instead, my Dora?

WRITTEN

WHILE MY BROTHER WAS WINDBOUND AT GRAVESEND.

O list, all ye cockneys, who gasping for air,
 From London on Sundays do wend,
 To Harrow, to Highgate, to Hampstead repair,
 But O never go to Gravesend, Gravesend,
 But O never go to Gravesend.

If you wish what you've earn'd in six days, on dry ground,
 On the water in one day to spend,
 At Putney, or Richmond, get drunk, or get drown'd—
 Don't get drunk, or get drown'd at Gravesend, Gravesend,
 Don't get drunk, or get drown'd at Gravesend.

But if, spite of all that experience can tell,
 You still to perdition do tend;
 If you wish, while on earth, to anticipate hell,
 And each organ of sense to offend;
 If you wish for a bug's nest, instead of a bed,
 For a dinner your vitals to rend;
 If you wish for an ache in both stomach and head—
 Why go, and be d——d, to Gravesend, Gravesend,
 Why go, and be d——d, to Gravesend.

MONODY
 ON THE
 DEATH OF EDMUND KEAN.

To drive the greatest bard into the brain,
 The heart, the soul of every class of men :
 To make the rudest rustic sympathize
 In feeling with the polish'd and the wise :
 To wake the fiercest passions of the heart,
 Rage, hate, revenge—For this Kean play'd his part.

Rous'd at the name, I see before me rise
 The kindling fire of those unearthly eyes :
 The dev'lish smile—the frown of with'ring fear—
 The calm contempt—the proud malicious sneer.
 Still do I hear him shout the scornful “——”
 In the mad ravings of the jealous Moor ;
 Shrink at the echos of that harrowing yell—
 “She's like a liar, gone to burning hell !”

Lo ! how to Shakspeare and to nature true ;
 He moves our pity for the vengeful Jew ;
 Calls forth compassion, through the basest wiles,
 And draws a tear for the “ bold bad Sir Giles.” ¹¹
 I see again, bewitch’d myself the while,
 The fascination of that murd’rous smile ;
 See wond’ring, wav’ring, gentle Lady Anne
 Abhor the murd’rer, while she loves the man ;
 Confess, when his successful suit is done,
 Ne’er in such guise was woman woo’d and won ;
 Doubt, till his own smooth tongue the treach’ry tells,
 Breaks the enchantment, and dissolves the spells.
 Breaks, said I ?—ay, I dream’d—the scene is o’er—
 The master spirit shall enchant no more !
 Let not hypocrisy’s invidious voice
 Dare to condemn, and at his fall rejoice.
 Judge not the lion by the ass’s laws ;
 His good and evil owe the selfsame cause.
 Let cold respectability, for shame,
 Cease warm susceptibilities to blame.
 Who mounts the giddiest heights provokes a fall—
 They cannot sink, who never rise at all !
 First pluck thou out the beam from thine own eye,
 Oh, stiffneck’d, unregen’rate Pharisee.
 He play’d a brilliant and a liberal part,
 The judgment erring—but how good the heart !
 Oh, be his failings in his tomb enshrin’d :
 His talents live in every gen’rous mind !

NOTES.

1.

In these lines, “*si liceat magnis componere parva,*” I have played a somewhat similar part to Dr. Brown, that Lucretius did to Epicurus.

2.

A remark of La Chambre in his *Treatise on the Characters of the Passions*.

3.

i. e. “I have been entangled in your snares, and, thank heaven, have escaped.” Those saved from shipwreck used to hang up their clothes in the temple of Neptune, with a picture representing the circumstances of their danger and escape.

4.

“The body is constantly undergoing change in all its parts. Probably no person at the age of twenty has one single particle in any part of his body which he had at ten, still less does any portion of the body he was born with continue to exist in or with him. All that he before had has now entered into new combinations, forming parts of other men, or of animals, or of vegetable or mineral substances, exactly as the body he now has will afterwards be resolved into new combinations after his death.”

“It is not more correct to say that all of us who are now living have bodies formed of what were once the bodies of those who went before us, than it is to say that some of us who are now living at the age of fifty have bodies which in part belonged to others now living at that and other ages.”

BROUGHAM'S *Nat. Theol.*

5.

The chief merits of a parody depend upon the excellence of the original.

6.

In the two last stanzas an exact imitation is not attempted to be preserved.

7.

γένυος ξουθῆς. ARIST. AV. 214.

8.

“His contemplation, which no doubt
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night.”

Henry V. Act I. sc. 1.

9.

This epigram was published with some others in Mr. Merivale's new edition of “Bland's Anthology,” and has appeared in Blackwood's Magazine.

10.

This epigram appeared this year in the Carthusian, No. III.

11.

Lord Byron was so affected on hearing Kean's Sir Giles Overreach, that he was obliged to quit his box. *Vide* MOORE'S NOTICES.

